



STATE OF INDIANA
INDIANA STATE EXCISE POLICE

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For Immediate Release

Excise Officers and Fort Wayne Police Arrest 27 at Southeast Motorcycle Club

Fort Wayne, Ind. (March 15th) – Indiana State Excise Police Officers and Officers from the Fort Wayne Police Department, assisted by the Allen County Sheriff's Department and the Indiana State Police, executed a search warrant at the clubhouse of Hard Hitters motorcycle club located at 5001 Avondale Road early this morning resulting in the arrests of 27 individuals.

At approximately 2:15 am, the Fort Wayne Police Department's Emergency Services Team and Allen County Sheriff's Department's SWAT team made entry into the premise where approximately 70 club members and visitors were located. Once inside, officers from the Fort Wayne Police Department's Gang and Violent Crimes Unit arrested 27 subjects on 33 preliminary charges. There were 17 charges for Visiting a Common Nuisance, six for Possession of Marijuana, one for Dealing Cocaine, and one for Possession of Synthetic Marijuana. Six individuals were also jailed on outstanding arrest warrants. Four Handguns were recovered during the investigation.

Indiana State Excise Police Officers arrested the club's President, Larry Lawrence, 40, and the Secretary of the club, Demetrius Carter, 29, both of Fort Wayne, each on the preliminary felony charge of Maintaining a Common Nuisance. Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Carter were booked into the Allen County Jail.

Excise Officers also cited the premise's Temporary Beer and Wine permit on preliminary administrative charges including violating the scope of that permit by allowing the carryout of alcoholic beverages and serving liquor. The permit was also cited for Maintaining a Common Nuisance. Those charges will be reviewed by the Prosecutor for Indiana's Alcohol and Tobacco Commission.

The Hard Hitter's clubhouse had been the source of numerous calls to the Fort Wayne Police Department for service over the past few months for incidents of shots fired, disturbances involving weapons, and fighting. Several shootings, including one homicide, investigated were found to have originated from altercations that had taken place inside the clubhouse or involving club members. Most recently, on December 28th of 2013, a club member was shot in the leg after a fight that occurred inside the clubhouse.

Indiana State Excise Police Superintendent Matt Strittmatter stated, "Permanent permit holders, as well as those obtaining a temporary permit, are expected to maintain a high and fine reputation within the community. We will continue to work with local police departments to identify problem locations and help ensure the safety of the community."

As the enforcement division of the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, the primary mission of the Indiana State Excise Police is to promote public safety by enforcing Indiana's Alcoholic Beverage Code. While excise officers have the authority to enforce any state law, they focus primarily on alcohol, tobacco and related laws.

All criminal defendants are to be presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.